



Imagining Place

Cultural Memories of North Queensland

Sandi Hook

PUBLISHED ON THE OCCASION OF

Imagining Place

Cultural Memories of North Queensland

Sandi Hook

PERC TUCKER REGIONAL GALLERY
30 JANUARY - 22 MARCH 2015

PUBLISHER

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Sandi Hook and Eric Nash

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Eric Nash, Sandi Hook, and Stu Corbett

PUBLICATION DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Eric Nash

COVER

[Insert credit line](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

An exhibition of work as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at James Cook University.



CONTACT

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Sat - Sun: 10am - 2pm



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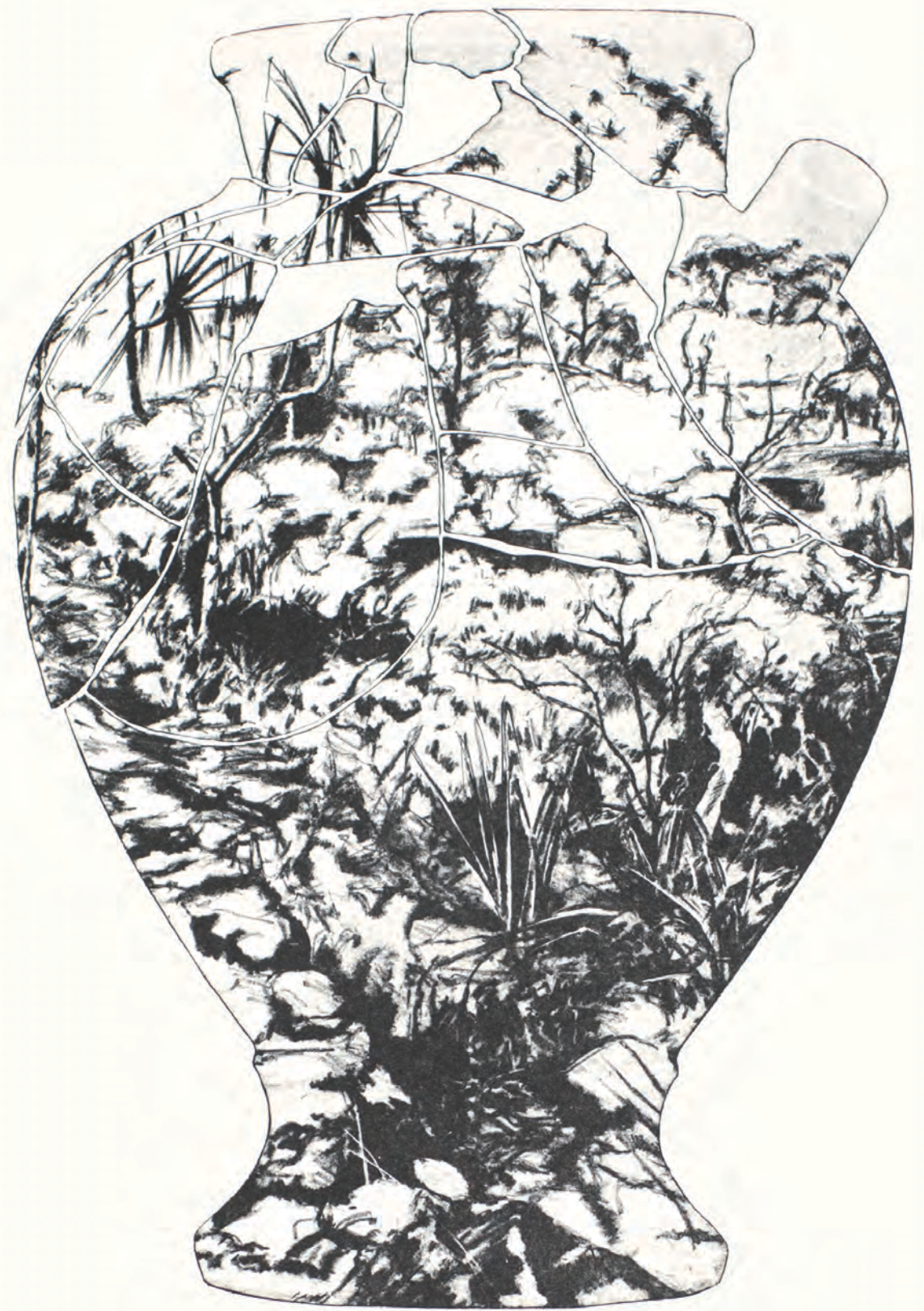


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The Artist Explorer

Townsville artist Sandi Hook's exhibition *Imagining Place: Cultural Memories of North Queensland* presents a selection of new work with a particular focus on our engagement - across cultures and across generations - with the unique north Queensland landscape.

In the exhibition, Hook affirms her keen sensibility when producing highly detailed and delicately resolved drawings and prints. *Imagining Place* is, however, more than simply the sum of its enchanting parts. Hook's two-dimensional works are but a way for her to share an experience with her viewers; that experience being the intense exploration of the region, which she has undertaken over the past several years.

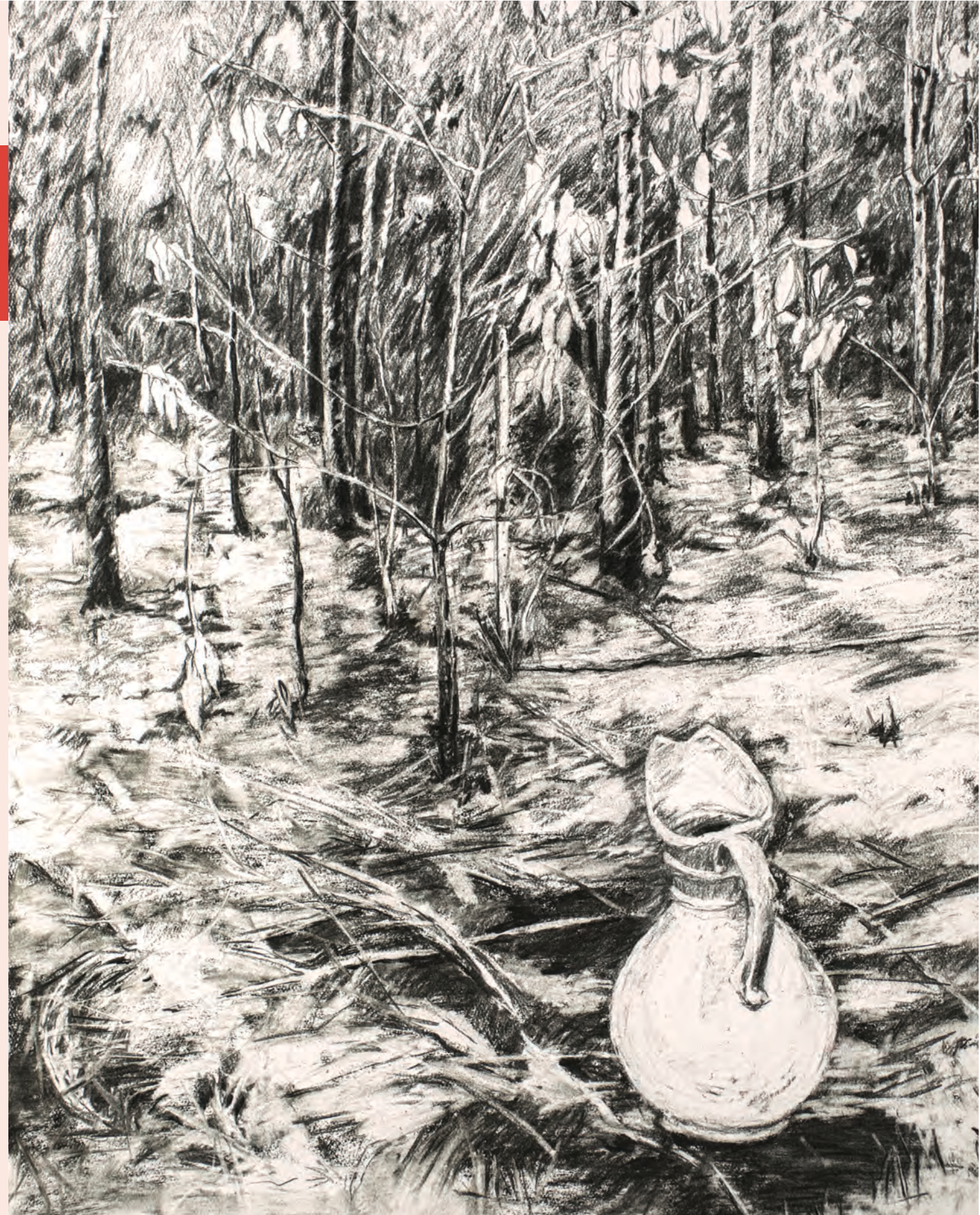
Like many early settlers and explorers, Hook's drawings are a visual record of the lands she visited. She stated, "*At every site, where possible, I have annotated and drawn in my visual diary and documented these places photographically for further practice in my studio.*" Perhaps unlike some of these early settlers and explorers, Hook's adventures are undertaken with respect to the fact that she is not the first, and that these lands have been walked, these rugged terrains endured, for many thousands of years and by many thousands of individuals.

The introduction of the white porcelain vessel into many of the drawings illustrates this awareness. The porcelain vessels relate directly to the vessels that sailed the high seas to explore the Australian continent, and in their whole form provide a metaphor for water, the key to survival. The breaking of these vessels, both physically at important sites for Indigenous and European travellers, and visually within her two-dimensional works, is representative of the cultural fragmentation stemming from the exploration and development of the land with no regard for its traditional owners. The repairing of these broken vessels provides a powerful call for healing.

While critical of the impact of colonial incursion, Hook is respectful of the toil of early settlers and explorers in an unforgiving landscape. In these works, viewers can glimpse where Hook has followed Aboriginal tracks, and also retraced the steps of early explorers Edmund Beasley Kennedy, Ludwig Leichhardt, and George Dalrymple.

The journey through Sandi Hook's exhibition may not be as physically challenging, but it is certainly equally as enlightening.

Eric Nash
Curator, Gallery Services



What Footprints Lie Beneath?

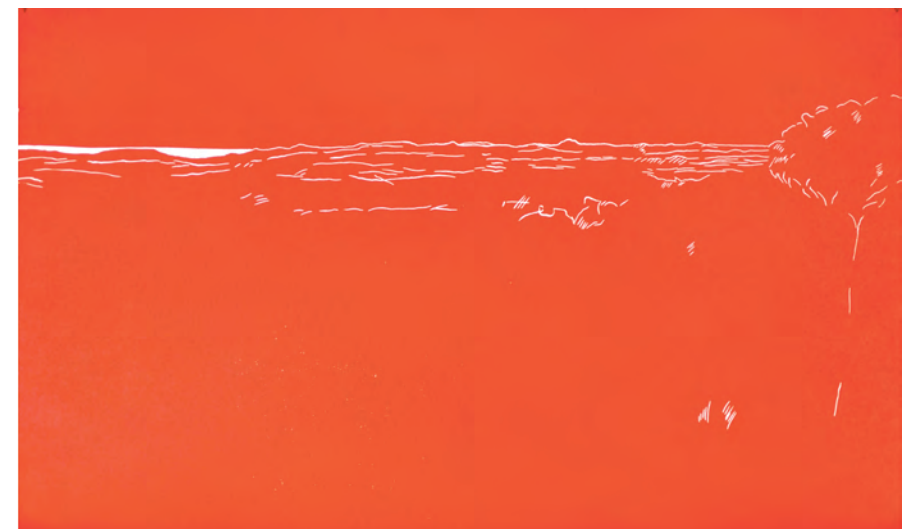
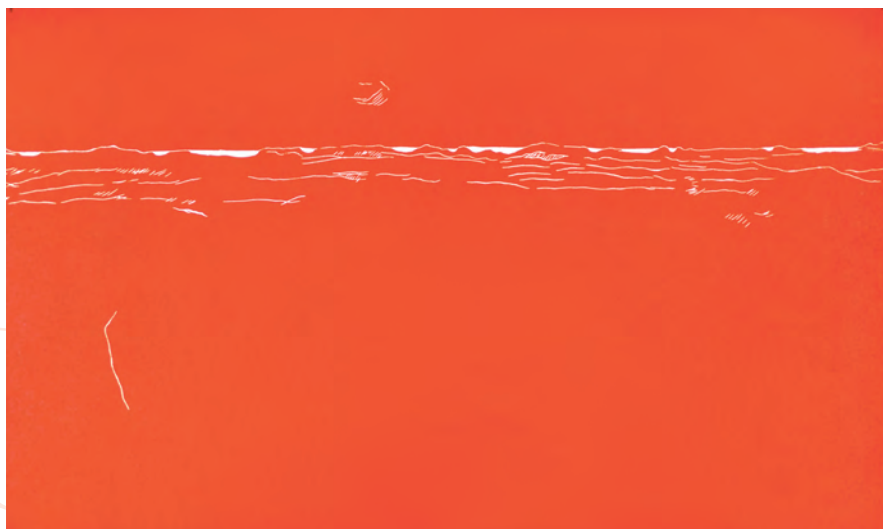
*This land of chequered history; criss-crossed by paths of time.
Colonial incursion, dispossession: Such a crime.
The tracks of people of the land, spiritually their place,
Trampled by people on the land, careless in their haste.
Explorers "discovering" land where tribal peoples roam:
Settlers taking ownership of someone else's home.*

*We're obliged as people of this land, without regard to race
To respect each other's culture and revere a sense of place.
Centuries of people have walked this timeless land,
Thirst quenched from common waterways; its harshness felt firsthand.
When we recognise our differences: discuss them face-to-face,
We will become one people; belong to the same place.*

*Reimagining North Queensland and its history up to here,
As a colonial "blank canvas"; white vessels filled with air.
Then the jugs are shattered, all flawed systems fall apart,
Slow reconciliation; thin black joints begin to start.
Sparse lines and missing pieces show how fragile is this base;
The bond uniting cultures and imagining of place.*

*The paths of modern travellers are often sealed with tar.
Most will go by boat or train or aircraft or car.
Venture off the well-worn paths; be excited and alive.
Walk where those who roamed this place, struggled to survive.
When you're standing on North Queensland tracks, what do they bequeath?
Think of those who crossed this place. What footprints lie beneath?*

Sandi Hook and Stu Corbett





Imagining Place: Cultural Memories of North Queensland

This exhibition is a visual investigation into 'place' in North Queensland. To focus investigations, I followed the paths of early explorers and settlers to investigate sites where they crossed paths. In the main these sites are remote. As the explorer artist, I travelled to those places to understand the physical terrain where different groups and cultures, including Aboriginal peoples, walked the same tracks. As I gathered my visual data during field trips I attempted to follow as near as possible the path of an explorer, Aboriginal inhabitant or settler.

In the sites I immersed myself in 'place' and tried to imagine the explorer in place, experiencing a constant unease of the unknown. The process of travel and lived experience was necessary to understand the environment sensorially: to feel the heat; see the wind move the trees; see the water running in the river; and experience the isolation and loneliness. In the main I have chosen water crossings, as these are the life force of the traveller from whatever time in history. In between the land is dry and I imagine the hardships this type of country

would bring. I began to comprehend and imagine 'place' in new creative ways. The name of the exhibition *Imagining Place: Cultural Memories of North Queensland* evokes conceptions of place containing memories of a past, under the care of Aboriginal people, followed by colonial incursion and settlement. The explorer's journals reflect their paths and experiences, but without a pictorial visual record. Imagining such a journey as the artist as the explorer in the twenty-first century, I follow these paths to understand and express

the enormous distance and the difficulties of survival for the early explorer in a challenging and unknown environment.

While not diminishing the arduous endeavours of the explorers, it is important to remember that their tracks crossed and often followed the paths of peoples who had lived with the land for centuries before. Their explorations, while in the most part beneficial to the new colonists, had devastating and lasting consequences.



The white vessels in this exhibition form a metaphor for colonial incursion. In the colonial view Australia was devoid of a known civilisation and development—the blank canvas or ‘Tabula Rasa’—available to be moulded into a British ideology in which to write the new stories of colonialism.

I broke these vessels in response to the effect of colonisation in North Queensland. These were broken at key sites usually at a water edge where the paths of Aboriginal peoples, early explorers and settler colonists sought water and refuge. Unbroken, the vessel is a metaphor for water and survival. The shattering of the vessels symbolises the fragmentation of the traditional life and habitat that existed before each new footprint was planted. The process of repairing the vessels suggests the uniting of cultural fragments toward reconciliation. The missing pieces and thin black lines in

the vastness of the white shards allude to the fragile and somewhat sparse bond that unites the different cultures and peoples in this place.

Pottery vessels represent civilisation from ancient to contemporary time. Containment of place in the vessel metaphor is juxtaposed with the vastness and intimacy of the landscape.

It is the container of place stories from colonisation and settlement to the present. These re-imagined visual stories aim to advance the cultural meaning of ‘place’ for future generations and to instil their participatory investment in and moral obligation to this land. In my artwork the landscape of water streams connect the generations of cultures who have passed through North Queensland sites.

Sandi Hook
Artist



Curriculum Vitae

Name Sandra Hook
Vocation Visual Artist and Art Educator

Biography

Sandi Hook is a regional artist in North Queensland. She is currently enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy at James Cook University. In previous years Hook has completed a Graduate Bachelor of Education (Secondary), and Bachelor of Visual Art with First Class Honours. Her artwork combines drawing in a variety of mediums, including charcoal, graphite, lithography and linoleum printing. Hook has exhibited in solo exhibitions in 2010 and 2013, and has participated in joint exhibitions with PressNorth printmakers in 2010 and 2011, *Compact Prints* in 2010 and 2012, and *The Percivals* at Perc Tucker Regional Gallery in 2010.

Education

2011 - 2015

Doctoral Candidate, 'Artists as Explorers: Reinterpretation of Colonial 'Place' in North Queensland' - JCU

2010

BVA Honours' thesis, 'Double Portraiture in Art and Historical Partnerships toward Contemporary Practice', (Class 1) - JCU

2001

Grad Bachelor of Education Secondary Art and English - JCU

1996

Bachelor of Visual Art - JCU

Solo Exhibitions

2013

Energies and Crossings: Connecting to Place
Main Space, Umbrella Studio, Townsville

2010

Déjà vu, Doubles and Desire
eMerge Space, SoCA, JCU, Townsville

Selected Group Exhibitions

2014 - *Wanderlust*, Umbrella Studio

2014 - *Dexterity*, Perc Tucker Regional Gallery

2014 - *Compact Prints*, Umbrella Studio

2012 - *Compact Prints*, Umbrella Studio

2012 - *Out of the Box*, Pinnacles Gallery

2011 - *Place and Being*, Artspaced Inc.

2010 - *A Sense of Void*, James Cook University

2010 - *Compact Prints*, Umbrella Studio

Collections

City of Townsville Art Collection

John Oxley Library Brisbane

Mackay Library

National Gallery of Australia

Private Collections throughout Australia

Professional Memberships

Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Townsville

Pinnacles Gallery, Townsville

Umbrella Studio contemporary arts

Flying Arts Alliance Inc

NAVA

QAGOMA

PressNorth Printmakers

Catalogues

Hook, S 2013 'Energies and Crossings: Connecting to Place'

Hook, S 2010 'Déjà vu, Doubles and Desire'





Townsville